A GODLIE MEDITAtion of the Christian soule, concerning a loue towards God and his church.

COMPILED IN French by Ladie Margaret, Queene of Navar, and aptly translated into English by our most gratious soueraign, Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queene of Englande, Fraunce, and Irelande.



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TO THE RIGHT VERtuous, and christianly learned young Lady Elizabeth, the noble daughter of our late soueraigne King Henrie the viij. I. Bale wisheth health with dayly increase of godly knowledge.



Diuers & many (most gracious lady) haue the opinions beene among the prophane philosophers & christian diuines, concerning right nobilitie, and no fewer strifes and contentions for the same. Some authors hauing vainly boasted it to take original of the old gods of the Gentiles, as euery land hath had his peculiar Saturn, Iupiter and Hercules, yea our England here and all. Some haue set it from the foure general monarchies of the Assyrians, Persians, Greekes and Romanes. Some haue attributed it to the bolde battailes, and bloudsheadings, in Ni- Nobilitie

nus of Babylō, the firſt inuenter of policies in vvar, in our great Albion the Chameſene, vvhich firſt in this regiō ſuppreſſed the poſterity of Iaphet, vſurping therin the firſt monarchy, in Brute, that more then ſix hūdred yeres after defaced of him the tirānous iſſue, in Ebranck and Dunvvallo, in Brenne and Belin, in great Conſtantine, Arthur, Kadwalladers Engiſt, Egbert, Alfrede, W. conquerour, and ſuch other, for like conqueſts of the Romans, Grecians, Galles, Picts, Britans, Saxons, Danes, Irishmen and Engliſhmen.

The hauty Romans ſet not yet a litle by them ſelues that they haue riſen of Eneas and Romulus, of vvhom the one moſt ſhameſully betrayed his own natiue kinred and countrey, the other moſt vnnaturally ſlevve his ovvn brother for vvorldly dominion. Lik as our vvelchmen here in England aduauncing their ſucceſsiō aboue the Engliſh vvil needs come of Dardanus & Brute, a foundation not vnlike to the other. These glorious champions for this far fetcht ground of their nobilitie, count

all

all other nations ignoble, prophane & barbarous, as is to be ſeen in the monu mẽts of their vvriters. But in the mean ſeaſon, they are not avvare that they vndiſcreetly preferre curſed Cham to bleſſed Iaphet, by vvhoſe poſteriy the Iles of the Gentiles vvere firſt ſorted out into ſpeeches, kinreds and nations Gen. 10. and not by Chams ofspring, of vvhõ the Troians & Romans had their noble begíning. That which the Chameſens had in thoſe Iles vvas by cruel vſurpation and tyranny, as teſtifieth Beroſus the Caldean, and herefore that ground of nobilitie is not all the beſt. Ouer and beſides al this, ſome haue applied it to the renowmed birth or ſucceſsi on of bloud, ſome to the aboundance of pleaſure vvorldly, ſome to the maintenance of great families, ſome to the ſumptuouſnes of notable buildings, ſome to high ſtomack & ſtature of perſon, ſome to valiantnes in martial feates, ſome to ſeemly maners of courteſie, ſome to liberality of rewards & gifts, ſome to the ancientnes

of long continuance, ſome to wiſdome learning, & ſtudy for a commō welth, vvith ſuch like. And theſe are not al to be diſalovved, for vve find them in Abraham & Dauid, with other iuſt fathers.

But now followeth a mōſterous, or vvhether ye vvil, a preſtigious nobilitie. The Romiſh clergie imagining to exalt themſelues aboue the levvd laytie (as they ſhame not yet to call the vvorldly powers) haue giuen it in a far other kind, to miters, maſſes, ſhauen crovvnes, oyled thombs, ſide govvns, furd amiſes, monkes covvles, and friers louſie coates, becomming therby pontificall Lords, ſpiritual ſirs, and ghoſtly fathers. This kind of nobilitie digd out of the donghil, haue I ſeen gorgeouſly garnished vvith the retorickes of Porphiry. Ariſtotle, Duns, & Raimundus decretals, in the bookes of Iohn Stanberie biſhop of herford, *De ſuperioritate eccleſiaſtica, de diſcrimine iuriſdictionum, & de poteſtate pontificia.* In the bookes alſo of Walter Hunt, an ordinarie reader ſometime in Oxford, *De*

Clergie.

Stanbery.

Hunt.

pre-

precellentia Petri, & de authoritate ecclesia. Yea and among themselues they haue much contended both by disputation and vvritings, vvhich of their sectes might other excel in the noblenes of christian perfection. The mōkes in publique scholes, by a distinctiō of the actiue and cōtemplatiue life, haue aduaunced their idle monkery aboue the office of a bishoppe, and the friers their scauld crauing beggery, aboue the degrees of them both, as is largelie seen in the brauling vvorks of Richard Maidston, Thomas Walden, William Bintre, and other vvhich haue vvrittē *contra Wicleuistas, & pro mendicatione fratrum.* Friers.

In the daies of King Edward the 4. Iohn Miluertō, prouinciall of the Carmelites, vvas ful three yeres a prisoner in the castle of Angel at Rome, at the sute of the bishops of England, for the same, and lost so the bishopricke of S. Dauids, vvherunto he vvas a litle afore elected. This matter haue I heard, vnder the title of Euangelicke perfection, most deepely reasoned in their or- Miluerton.

dinarie disputations at their concourses, conuocations & chapters (as they called them) yea by those whō I knew most corrupt liuers. Hereunto for furnishing out the same, the gray Fryers added S. Frances painted vvounds, the blackfriers S. Dominicks bold disputing vvith heretikes, the vvhite friers our Ladies fraternitie, and the Augustine friers the great doctrine of their patron. In the vniuersities after much to and fro hath it been cōcluded, that the order of a priest hath far excelled in dignitie the order of a bishop. And this haue they left behinde them for a most graue and deep reason therupon. Marke their more then Luciferlike presumption therein. Such powver hath a prieh (say they) as hath neither angel, nor yet man, be he of neuer so great authoritie, science or vertue, for a priest by vvord may make him againe, that by vvord made heauen and earth. A priest may euery day both beget him & beare him, vvheras his mother Mary begat him (bare him they vvoulde say) but once. These are their very speeches

ches, in a book entituled *de origine nobilitatis, cap.* 5. vvith much more circũstance of matter. O blasphemous belly beasts, and most idle vvitted sorcerers Hovv idolatrously exalt they thẽselues aboue the eternal liuing God and his Christ?

Iohn Chrisostome, a man taught & brought vp in christian philosophy, defineth the true nobilitie after another sort then did the prophane vvriters. He calleth it not with Aristotle a worthines of progenie, neither yet vvith Varro an opulencie of riches, but a famous renovvne obteyned by long exercised vertue. He is puisant, high and valeant (saith he) and hath nobilitie in right course, that disdaineth to geue place to vices, and abhorreth to be ouercome of them. Doctrine greatlie adorneth a man highly borne, but a godly endeuour of christianitie beutifieth him most of all. By none other wayes haue the Apostles and martirs obteyned a noble report, then by the valeant force of pure doctrine & faith.

A gentle heart (saith Seneca) or a sto-

ſtomack that is noble, moueth, prouoketh, & ſtirreth only to things honeſt. No man vvhich hath a noble vvit, deliteth in things of ſmal value, much les in matters of filthines or ſuperſtition. Chiefly appertaineth it to men and vvomen of ſincere nobilitie, to regard the pure doctrine and faith, vnto ſuch hath God promiſed in the ſcriptures, aboundance of temporal things, long life, fortunate children, a kingdome durable, vvith ſuch like, Deut. 28.

Faith.

A moſt worthy conqueror is Gedeō noted in the ſcriptures, for deſtroying falſe religion, & renuing the kingdom of faith, Iudg. 6. So is king Aſa, for remouing the male ſtevves from the prelates abhorring mariage, and for putting dovvn idols, vvhich his forfathers mainteined, 3. Reg. 15. So is king Ioſaphat, for being couragious in the vvais of God, and for putting dovvn the hil altars, and their ſacrifices, 2. paral. 17. So is king Iehu, for ſlaying the idolatrous prieſts, and for breaking & burning their great God Baal, and for making ſtakes of their holy Church, 4. Reg.

Gedeon.

Aſa rex.

Ioſaphat.

Iehu.

Reg.10.So is king *Ezechias*, for cleanſing the houſe of the Lord from al filthines, before his time therin occupied, 2.paral. 29. and for breaking dovvne the braſen ſerpent, & idolatrous images vvith their altars and ſanctuaries, 4.Reg.18. *So* is K. Ioſias, for ſuppreſſing religious perſons, and altarprieſts for conſuming their ievvels and ornaments, and for ouerthrovving their buggerie chambers in the houſe of the Lord, 4. Reg. 23. This noble king alſo deſtroyed all their carued images, hee ſtrevved the duſt of them vpon their graues that had offered to them, and burnt the prieſts bones vpon their altars, reſtoring againe the lavves of the Lord, 2. paral. 34. Ieſus Sirach reporteth of him finally, that he vvholly directed his heart to the Lord, and took avvay al abhominations of the vngodly. Eccle 49. Beſides that is ſpoken of king Dauid and king Salomon.

Ezechias.

Ioſias.

Not I onely, but many thouſandes more vvhich vvil not from henceforth bovv any more to Baal, are in full and perfect hope, that al theſe moſt highly notable,

notable and princely actes, vvil reuiue and liuely flouriſh in your moſt noble and vvorthy brother, K. Edward the 6. Moſt excellent & godly are his beginnings reported of the very forrein nations, calling him for his vertuous, learned, godly and prudent youthes ſake, the ſecond Ioſias. Thoſe his vvonderful principles in the eyes of the vvorld and no leſſe glorious before God, thus being to his honor, that eternal liuing God continue and proſper to the end, that he may haue of them as had theſe vvorthy kings afore rehearſed, a right noble and famous report. Nobilitie ſought by vvicked enterpriſes, and obteined by the ſame (as in many before our daies, and in ſome novv of late) is not els but a publicke & notable infamie, and in the end eternall dānation. Nobilitie vvon by the earneſt ſeeking of Gods high honor, is ſuch a precious crovvne of glory, as vvil neuer periſh here, nor yet in the vvorld to come.

Cain after a vvorldly manner, or among the vngracious ſort, is holdē noble for ſlaying his brother Iudas of the

pri-

prelates(for he receiued of them a noble reward) for betraying Christ, Herod of the Ievves for murthering the innocents. And what is there more worthy reproach, dishonor & shame, then these execrable facts? The nature of true nobilitie(as I said before)is not to rise of vice, but of vertue, though many men there seeke it. Of the most excellēt kind of nobilitie is he sure(most vertuous and learned Lady) which truely beleueth and seeketh to do the will of the eternal father, for therby is he brought forward, & promoted into that heauenly kinred, Ioh. 1. By that meanes becommeth he the dear brother, sister and mother of Christ, Mat. 12. a citizen of heauen with the apostles & prophets, Ephe. 2. yea, the child of adoption, and heire together with Christ in the heauenly inheritance, Rō. 8. No such children left Socrates behind him, nor Demosthenes, nor Plato nor Cicero with al their plesant eloquence and wisdome. No such heritage could Alexander leaue his posteritie, nor Charles, Arthur, nor Dauid.

Of

Of this nobilitie haue I no doubt (Lady moſt faithfully ſtudious) but that you are, vvith many other noble vvomen & maidens more in this bleſſed age. If queſtion vvere askt me how I knovvit, my anſwere would be this. By your godly fruite, as the fertile tree is no othervviſe then therby knovven, Luc. 6. I receiued your noble booke, right frutefully by you trāſlated out of the French tōgue into Engliſh. I receiued alſo your golden ſentences out of the ſacred ſcriptures, vvith no leſſe grace then learning, in 4 noble languages, *Latin*, *Greeke*, *French* and *Italian*, moſt ornately, finely & purely vvrittē vvith your ovvn hand, vvōderfully ioyous vvere the learned men of our city Murſeus, Buſcoducius, Bomelius, Lithodius, and Imānus, as I ſhewed vnto them the ſaid ſentences, in beholding (as they haue reported) ſo much vertue, faith, ſcience, & experience of languages and letters, ſpecially in noble youth & feminity. Through which occaſion there be of them I knovv, that cannot vvithhold their learned handes

4. tongues.

Men learned.

from

from the publiſhing thereof, to the hie praiſe of god the geuer, neither yet frō vvriting to your worthy grace for ſtudious continuance in the ſame. Your ſaid ſentences, they ſay far paſſeth the Apothegmes of Plutarchus, the Aphoriſmes of Theognis, the Stratagemes of Iſocrates, the graue golden counſels of Cato and the manifold morals of John Goldeſton the great allegoriſer, with ſuch other like. Sentences

Your firſt written clauſes in iiii. ſpeeches *Latin*, *French*, and *Italian*, out of the xiii. Pſalme of noble Dauid, mentioneth that the vnfaithfull reckoneth fooliſhly in their heartes, there is no God. Wherevpon ſo corrupt they are in their vain coniectures, and ſo abhominable in their daily doings, that not one of their generatiō is godly. By this do your grace vnto vs ſignifie, that the barren doctrin and good works without faith of the hypocrites, which in their vncōmanded latine ceremonies ſerue their belly, & not Chriſt, in greedily deuouring the patrimonie of pore widdowes and orphanes, are both execrable The 1. clauſe. Hipocrits

crable in themselues, & abhominable before God, for though those painted sepulchres haue the name of the Lord in their mouthes, & greatly boast the good works of the law, yet know they not vvhat belongeth to his true honor but hate in their vvicked hearts, both glorious name and vvorde. The true doctrine of faith, and the feare of God vvil that vvicked sort (vvhom this psalme vvringeth) not heare, but still torment the consciences of miserable vvretched idiotes, for aduantage of masses, & momblings. Happy are they of this later age that in the gospel haue receiued the sauing health out of Sīō, (as your grace hath done) being cleere frō the sting of those vipetous worms. Blessed be those faithful tutors & teachers, vvhich by their most godly instructions haue thus fashioned your tender youth into the right image of Christ, and not Antichrist.

Your later clause in the *Greeke*, inciteth vs to the right worshippings of God in spirit & veritie, Ioh. 4. to hono-

ring

ting of our parentes in the seemely offices of naturall children. (Ephes. 6.) and to the reuerend vsing of our christian equales in the due ministrations of loue. (1. Pet. 2.) Neyther Benedict nor Bruno, Dominicke nor Frances (which haue of long yeares bene boasted for the principall patrones of religion) euer gaue to their superstitious brethren, so pure preceptes of sincere christianitie. Neyther yet Peter Lombard in his iiii. bookes of sentences, with vvhose smokie diuinitie, the lowsie locustes, monks, chanons, prieستes and friers, haue these foure hundred yeares darkened the cleere sunne, whiche is the veritie of God. (Ap. 9.) If godly wise men would do no more but conferre this learning of yours, and of other noble vvomen in these dayes, vvith the doctrine of Robert Kylvvarby archbishoppe of Canterbury and cardinall, vvhiche the vniuersities of Oxford and Paris vvere svvorne to, for mayntenance of that christianity in the yeare of our Lord 1276. by the consent of all masters, regentes and non regentes, I doubt it not but they should find iust

Monachi.

Lombardus.

Robert Kilwarbie.

cause to hold vp both their hands and praise their Lord God for changing
A change. that hell into this heauen. An vnsauory gust thereof shall they find, adioyned of the Parisians as necessary deuinity, to the foresaid sentences of Peter Lom-
The booke. bard.

In your forenamed booke, composed first of all by the right vertuous lady Margaret, sister sometime to the French king Frances, and Queene of Nauarre, And by your grace most diligently and exactly translated into english, finde I most precious treasure concerning the soule. Wherfore I haue added thereunto the title of a godly meditation of the soule, concerning a loue towardes God and his Christ. Moste liuely in these and such other excellent factes, expresse ye the naturall emphasie of your noble name Elizabeth in
Elizabeth. the Hebrue, is as much to say in the latine, as Dei mei requies in English, the rest of my God. Who can thinke God
An heart not to rest in that heart which sendeth forth such godly fruites? I thinke none that hath right discretion. Your penne hath heere plenteously vttered the a-

bundance

bundance of a godly occupied heart, like as did the virginall lips of Christes moste blessed mother, when she sayd with heauenly reioyce, My soule magnifieth the Lord, and my spirite reioyceth in God my sauiour. (Luke 1) Manie noble women of frethe literature haue beene aforetime in this region, whose noble clasure or rehearsall of names I entend to shewe in the ende of this book, but none of them were euer yet like to those which are in our age. No, neither Cambra, Martia, Constantia, Agasia, Vodicia. Bunduica, Claudia, Helena, Vrsula, Hilda, nor suche other like. This one copie of yours haue I brought into a number, to the intent that manie hungrie soules by the inestimable treasure contained therein, may be sweetly refreshed. The spirite of the eternall sonne of God Iesus Christ, be alwaies to your excellent grace assistant that yee may send foorth more suche wholesome fruites of soule, & become a nourishing mother to his deere congregation, to their comforte & his high glorie, Amen.

Noble women learned.

Conclusio.

Your bound orator I. Bale.

IF thou doe thorowly reade this work (deer friend in the lord) marke rather the matter than the homely speeche thereof, considering it is the studie of a woman, which hath in her neither cunning nor science, but a feruent desire that ech one may see, what the gift of god the creatore doth when it pleaseth him to iustifie a heart. For what is the heart of a man, concerning his own strēgth, before he hath receiued the gift of faith? Thereby only hath he knowledge of the goodnesse, wisedome, and power of God. And as soon as he thorow that faith, knoweth pithily the truth, his heart is anon full of charitie & loue. So that by the feruentnes therof, he excludeth all fleshly feare, and firmely trusteth in god vnfainedly. For certainly the gift, which God the creator giueth freely at the beginning, doth neuer cease till it hath made him godly, which putteth his full trust in God.

Mat. 1.

Hebrew. 11.

1. Iohn. 4.

O happie and fortunate gift, which causeth a man to possesse a grace so desired. Alas no man could this vnderstand, vnlesse by such gift God had giuen it him. And great cause he hath to doubt of it, vnlesse God hath made him to feele it in his heart. Therefore gentle reader, with a godly mind I beseeche the patiently this worke to peruse, which is but small in quantitie, and taste nothing but the fruite thereof. Praying to God full of all goodnesse, that in thy hart he will plant the liuely faith. Amen.

Iohn. 6.

A GODLY MEDITATION of the christian soule, concerning a *loue towardes God and his Christ*, compiled in French by lady Margaret Queene of Nauarre, and aptly translated into English by the right vertuous lady Elizabeth daughter to our late soueraign king Henry the viii.

WHERE is the hel, full of trauaile, paine, mischief, and torment: Where is the pitte of curtednesse, out of which doth spring all desperation: Is there any hel so profound that is sufficient to punishe the tenth part of my sinnes, which are so many in number, that the infinite swarme of them so shadoweth my darkened sences that I can not accompt them neyther yet well see them: I am farre entered in amongest them, and (that much woorse is) I haue not the power to obtaine the true knowledge of the deepe dangers of them. I perfectly Iob.7. Rom.7.

feele, that their roote is in me. And outwardly I see none other effect but al is either branche, leafe, or els fruite that it bringeth forth all about me. If I thinke to looke for better, a branch commeth and closeth mine eyes, and in my mouth doth fall when I would speake, the fruite so bitter to swallow downe. If my spirite be stirred for to hearken, then a great multitude of leaues doth enter into mine eares, and my nose is all stopped with flowres.

Psal. 94.

Nowe behold howe in paines crying and weeping, my poore soule, a slaue and prisoner, doth lie without light, hauing her feete bound through her concupiscence and also both her armes through euil vse, yet the power to remedie it, doth not lye in me, neyther haue I power to crie for helpe. Againe, so farforth as I can perceiue, I haue no hope of succour, but throw the grace of God that I cannot deserue, whiche may raise euerie one from death. By his brightnesse he giueth light to darkenesse, and his power examining my fault, doth breake all the baile of ignorance, & giueth me cleare vnderstanding, not onely that this commeth of me, but also what lying bideth in me: Where I

2. Cor. 3.

Iohn 12.

am

am and wherefore I doe labour. Who he is whome I haue offended, to whome I did obey so seldome. Therefore it is conuenient that my pride be suppressed.

And humbly with weeping heart, I do confesse that I am muche lesse then nothing, before my liuely myer, after a dunghill a bodie prompte to all euill not willing other thinge, also subiect to care, sorrowe and paine, A short life, and the end vncertaine. The whiche vnder sinne by Adam is solde, and by the law iudged to be damned. For I haue neuer the power to obserue one onely commandement of God, I doe feele the strength of sinne in me, therefore is my sinne no whit the lesse to be hidden. And the more he is dissembled outwardly, so much the more hee increaseth within the heart. That whiche God will, I cannot will, and what hee would not, I often times desire to performe. Which thing doth constraine me by importable sorrowe, to wishe the end of this miserable bodie thorow desired death, because of my wearie and raging life. Iob. 14. Sap. 2.

Who shall be hee then, that shall deliuer and recouer such good for me? Alas it cannot bee a mortall man, for his power

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Rom.7. and strength is not such, but it shalbe the only good grace of ỹ almighty God which is neuer slacke to preuẽt vs with his mercie. O what a matter is that, without deseruing anie goodnesse of him: I serued him slouthfully, and without ceasing offended him euerie day, yet is he not slacke to helping me. He doth see the euill that I haue, what and howe much it is, and that of my selfe I can doe nothing that good is, but with heart and body so inclined am I to the contrary, that I feele no strength in me vnlesse it be for to doe euill. Hee doth not tarrie till I humbly pray him, or that (seeing my hell and damnation) I doe cry vpon him. For with his spirite he maketh a waylyng in my heart greater then I can declare, whiche asketh the gift whereof the desire is vnknowne to my little power.

Gen.6.

Psal.37.

And this the same vnknowne sight doth bring me a newe desire, shewing the good that I haue lost by my sinne, and giuen me againe through his grace and bountie, that which hath ouercome all sin. O my Lord what grace and goodnesse is this, which doth put out so many sinnes. Nowe may we see that thou art full of all

godly

godly loue to make me, a sinner, thy ser-
uaunt and childe. Alas my God, I did not Luke.15
seeke thee, but I fledde and ranne away
from thee. And here beneath thou camest
to me whiche am nothing but a wourme of
the earthe, all naked. What doe I say,
wourme? I doe him wrong, that am so Iohan.8.
naughtie, and swarme so full of pride, de-
ceite, malice and treason. The promise
which my friendes made, when I was
baptised is such, that I alwaies through
faith in thy passion should feele the morti- Collo.3.
fication of my flesh and dwel alwaies with
thee in the crosse where thou were fast
nailed (as I beleeue) and yeelded deatly
dead as I also should yeeld all sinne.

This haue I oftentimes taken vpon me
againe, untied, and set at large, I haue
broken, denyed, and falsified my promise,
and through pride, I haue lift vp my will
in such a maner, that through slouth, my
duetie towardes thee was forgotten. And
that much more is, as well the profite or Mat.16.
value of thy promise, which I had of thee
in the day of my baptisme, as also thy sa-
uing loue and promises following, I haue
all alike neglected. What shall I saye
more? Albeit that oftentimes thou per-

ceiuing

reuiuing me wretched and vnhappie, hath giuen me so many warnings in faith and in sacramentes, admonishing me by preachinges, and comforting me by the receiuing of thy worthy body and sacred blood, promising also to put me in the number of them that are nowe adorned with perfect innocencie: Yet haue I all these high benefites, thy sweete inuocations, and thy louing kindnesse, cleane forgotten.

Iohn. 6.

Diuerse times haue I with thee, hidden retirement: And partly for that my poore soule was too much fed with euill breath of detestable doctrine of hypocrites, I despised such succour and ghostly phisicke in Gods worde, as would haue holpe me: And if I had bene willing to looke for it perhaps at that time no teachers conuenient. For there is neither man, saint, nor angel, for whome the heart of a sinner (without thy spirite) will change. Alas good Iesus, thou beholding my blindenesse, and that at my neede I could haue no succour of men, diddst open the way of my saluation. O howe great is the goodnesse, and howe inestimable the sweetnesse which thou hast shewed therein? Is there anie father so naturall to the daughter, or brother to the sister, which would euer

Iere. 7.

Psal. 18.

haue

haue done as he hath done: For hee came into the hell to succour my soule, where against his will hee was, intending to haue perished, because hee did not loue.

Alas sweete Lord thou hast loued her, yea, to the veryie outshedyng of thy moste precious blood. O charitie feruent and incomparable. Not slacke art thou in loue that so louest euerie sinner, yea, and also thine enemies, not onely in forgiuing their offences, but also in giuing thy selfe for their saluation, libertie, and pleasaunce, to the death, scorne, trauaile, paine and sufferance. Which I call remember, what should be the occasion of thy loue towardes me, I can see nothing els but a loue woonderfull, whiche moueth thee to giue me that I cannot deserue. Therefore God as farre forth as I can see, I ought to giue no thankes for my saluation, but onely vnto thee, to whome I owe the praise thereof, as to him which is my sauiour and creatour. What a thing is it that thou hast done so much for me? Thou art not onely contented to haue forgiuen me my sinnes, but also hast giuen vnto me the right lawfull gift of grace.

1. Iohn. 3.

Iohn 5.

Ephes. 3.

For it should suffise me, I comming out of suche a danger, to be like a stranger vsed. But thou doest handle my soule, (if I durst so say it) as a mother, daughter, sister and wife. O Lord, I am the trespasser whiche am not worthy to come neere the doore of thy righte high place to aske bread, where thy dwelling is. O what grace is this, that so sodainly thou vouchsafest to draw my soule into such highnes, that thee feeleth her selfe ruler of my bodie. She poore, ignorant and lame, doth finde her selfe with thee, riche, wise, and strong; because thou hast written in her heart the roote of thy spirite and holy word, giuing her true faith for to receiue it. Which thing made her to conceiue thy sonne, in beleeuing him to be man, God, Sauiour, and also the true remitter of sinnes. Therefore doest thou assure her, that she is mother to thy sonne of whome thou art the onely father.

Rom. 8.

Math. 12.

And furthermore, O my father here is a great loue: for thou art not weary of well doing: seing that thy sonne full of diuinitie hath taken the body of a man, and diumingle himselfe with our ashes, whiche thing a man cannot vnderstand vnlesse he

he hath a true faith. Je hath pleased ther to put him so neare vs, that he did ioyne him selfe vnto our fleth. Then wee seeing him to be called man, wee are bold to call hym sister and brother. Nowe the soule which may say of her selfe, that she is the sister of God, ought to haue her heart allured. After this doest thou declare with great loue, howe her creation is onely of the good will, whiche it pleaseth thee alwaies to haue towardes her, giuing assurance that before her first day, or time of being prouided for her, thou bestowedst thy loue on her, and howe thorow loue thou hast made her (as alone of power thou canst well do it) and also howe thou didst put her within this bodie, not for to sleepe with sloth, but that both of them shoulde haue none other exercise, but onely to thinke howe to doe some seruice vnto thee. Phil.2. Gen.16.

Then the trueth maketh her to feele that there is in thee true paternitie. O what honour, what sweetnesse, and what glorie hath the soule, which doth alwaies remember that thee is thy daughter, and in calling the father, she doth thy commandement? What is there more? Is that all? No, it doth please thee to giue her Tren.2.

an

another name, to call her thy wife, and that she againe doe call thee husband, declaring howe thou hast freely manumitted the marriage of her. By the bantling thou hast made a promise, to giue her thy goodes and riches, and thou againe to take her sinnes, for thee hath nothing els by heritage of her first father Adam. All her treasures, that she hath of nature, are nothing els but sinnes, whiche thou hast tied vpon thee, and paid all her whole debt with thy goodes and landes.

Colos.

Thou hast made her so riche, and with so great a ioynter indued her, that she knowing her selfe to bee thy wedded wife, doth beleue to be quit of al that she oweth, esteeming verie little that thee hath beere beneath. She forsaketh her old father, and all the goodes that he giueth, for her husbandes sake. Surely (O my God) my soule is sore hurt to be fed with such good, and againe releeued in leauing the pleasure of this worlde for that which is eternall, where peace is without warre. I maruell that she (this remembring) doth not loose her witte, countenance, & speach. Father, father, alas what ought I to thinke? Shall my spirite be so bold as to

Rom.

1. Iohn 5.

take

take vppon him to call the father? Yea, & also our father, for so hast thou taught in the Paternoster. But to call me daughter, hast thou sayd? I beseeche thee, tell me. Alas yea, when with great sweetenesse, thou saidst daughter, lend me thy heart. Prouerb. 23.

O my God, in steed of lending, he is readie to giue himselfe wholly vnto thee. Receiue him then, and do not permit that anie creature put him from thee: so that for euer with faithfull stedfastnesse he may loue thee in a daughterly loue. Now my Lorde if thou be my father, may I thinke that I can by thy mother? Indeede I can not well perceiue, howe I should conceiue thee that createdst me. But thou didst in this matter satisfie my doubt, when in preaching & in stretching forth thy handes didst say, Those that shall doe the will of my father, they are my brethren, also my sister and mother. I beleeue then, that hearing and reading the wordes whiche thou hast taught and vttered by thy holy prophetes: The same also which thyselfe thy true preachers, thou doest daily declare vnto men in beleeuing it, and stedfastly desiring to fulfill, I conceiue thee, Apoc. 13. Luke 11.

and

and beare thee by lone. Therefore without ante feare, will I take vppon me the name of a mother. What, mother of god? O sweete virgin Mary, I beseeche thee, be not angrie that I take vp such a title. I doe neither steale, nor usurpe any thing vppon thy priuiledge. For thou onely hast aboue all women receiued of him so great honour, that no man can in himselfe comprehend how he hath bene willing to take in thee our flesh. For thou art mother and perfect virgin before and after, and in his holy birth. In thy blessed wombe thou diddest beare him and nourish him. Thou diddest followe him in his tribulations, and also in his teachinges. Nowe briefly to conclude. Thou hast with God found such grace, as the enemie through malice and deceite, had caused Adam and his posteritie to lose: by Eue and him we had lost it, and by thy sonne hath it bene preuented vnto vs againe.

Math. 1.

1. Cor. 15.

Therefore hast thou bene rightcously called full of grace. For thou lackedst neither grace nor vertue, sith that hee which is the best among them that be good, alls the spring of all goodnesse and power, which hath created in thee so pure innocen-

Luke. 1.

cie

cle, that thou art ẏ example of all vertues) hath builded in thee his dwelling and temple, he through loue did conforme himself with thee, and thou art transformed in him. Therefore if anie man should thinke to giue the greater praise then God himselfe hath done, it were a fowle blasphemie. For there is no such praise, as is the same which commeth from God. Thou also hast had faith so firme and constant, that (by grace) she had the power to make thee godly. Wherefore I will not take vpon me, to giue thee greater praise, then the honour which thy soueraigne Lord hath giuen vnto thee. For thou art his corporall mother, and also through faith his spirituall mother. Luke. 1. Acts 1.

And I following thy faith with humblenesse, am his spirituall mother also. Alas my God the brotherlinesse ẏ thou hast towardes me through thy humblenesse, in calling me sister, is great. Didst thou euer say in it any thing afore? Alas yea. For thou hast broken the kindred of my olde father, calling me daughter by adoption. Well then, seeing that we haue both but one father, I will not feare to call thee my brother. For so hast thou re- Rom. 8.

Cant. 4. ported by Solomon in his ballet, saying: My sister and spowse thou hast wounded my heart with the sweete looke of one o thine eies, and with one chaine of thy necke. Alas my brother, I wishe for nothing els, but that in wounding thee, I might finde my selfe wounded with thy loue. To that would I giue my selfe, and likewise thou doest call me wife in that place, shewing largely that thou louest me, saying by these wordes amorous,

Cant. 2. Arise my deere doue, and come hitherward my delectable spouse. Therfore shal I saye with louing faith, thou art mine and I am thine. Thou doest call me thy loue and fayre spouse. If it be so, such hast thou made me. Alas, doth it please thee, to giue me such names? They are truely able to breake a mans heart, and cause it to burne through loue vnspeakable, when he thinketh vppon the honour that thou doest vnto him, which is much greater then hee hath deserued. A mother, a mother, a mother? Alas but of what childe is it? Truely

Luke 8. of such a sonne, that my heart doth breake for loue. My God, my sonne? O Jesus what speach is this, mother, daughter? O happie kindred. O what sweetenesse doth

proceede

proceede out of that paternitie. But what daughterly and reuerent feare ought I to haue towardes him, my father, yea and my creatour, my protectour and sauiour? To be thy sister, alas here is a great loue.

Now doest thou breake my hart in the middest to make roome for the same so swcete a brother. So that no other name be written in the same, but onely my brother Iesus the sonne of God. No other man will I giue place to, for all the scourging and beating, that they can doe vnto me. Keepe my heart then, my brother and friend, and let not thy enemie enter into it. O my father, child, brother, & spouse, with handes ioyned, humbly vppon my knees I yeeld thee thankes and prayses, that it pleaseth thee to turne thy face towards me, conuerting my heart, and couering me with such grace, that thou dost see no more my euils and sinnes. So well hast thou hidden them, that it seemeth, thou hast put them in forgetfulnesse, Yes, and also they seeme to be forgotten of me. which haue committed them, For fayth and loue causeth me to forget them, putting wholly my trust in thee alone.

Canti. 8.

Acts. 4.

Ezech. 33.

Then my father, in whom lyeth vnfai-

ned loue, whereof can I haue feare in my heart? I confesse that I haue done all the
Psalm.31. euill that one creature can doe, and that of my selfe I am nought. Also that I haue offended thee as the prodigall childe did,
Luke 15. following the foolishe trade of the flesh, wherewith I heue spent all my substance, and the aboundance of goodes, which I had receiued of thee. For pouertie had withered me away euen as haye, & peeled my spirite dead for hunger, seeking to eate the reliefe of swine. But I found verie little sauour in such meates. Then I seeing my life to be so miserable, I did
Ezech.18. returne vnto thee my father againe, saying. Alas I haue sinned in heauen and before thee. I am not worthy (I tell it before euery body) to be called thy child. But O bountifull father, doe no worse to me, then to one of thy household seruantes.

Alas what loue and zeale is this? for thou wouldest not tarrie my commings
Luke 15. and prayer, but stretching out thy hand receiuedst me, when I did thinke that thou wouldest not looke vpon me. And in stead to haue punished, thou dost assure me of my saluation. Where is he then that shall punishe me, when my father shall de-

fie

him my sinne: There is no iudge that can condemne anie creature, vnlesse God himselfe would damne him. I feare not the want of goodnesse: for I haue my God for my father. My enemie shall doe me no harme, for my father shall take all hys strength away. If I owe anie thing, hee shall pay it all for me. If I haue deserued death, he (as a king) shall pardon me, and deliuer me from prison and hanging. Esa. 27.

But heere is the worst. What maner of mother haue I bene? for after that I by faith, had receiued the name of a true mother, I became vnkinde vnto thee, because that after I had conceiued and brought thee forth, I left reason, and being subiect to my will, not taking heede vnto vnto thee, I fell asleepe and gaue place to my great enemie. The which in the night of ignorance, I being asleepe did steale thee from me craftely, and in thy place, she did put her child which was dead. So did I leese thee, which is an hard sorrowe and remorse for me. Now haue I lost thee by mine owne fault (my sonne) because I tooke no heede to keep thee. Sensualitie my neighbour (I beeing in my beastly sleepe) did steale thee from me, Rom. 7. 3. Reg. 3.

and gaue me another childe which had no life in him, named sinne, whome I will not haue, for I doe vtterly forsake him.

She affirmed that he was mine owne but I knewe him to be hers. For as soone as I came to the light of grace, which thou hadst giuen me, then I knew my glory to be changed, when I sawe the dead childe not to be mine. For the same which was aliue (whome shee had taken away) was mine owne. Betweene Iesus and sin
3. Cor. 6. is the change so apparant. But heere is a strange thing. This olde woman causeth me to keepe him which is dead, whom she reporteth to be mine, and so she will maintaine. O Solomon, a full true iudge, thou hast heard this lamentable processe and ordained to content the parties, that the childe shoulde be deuided in two partes.
3. Reg. 3. The false woman agreeth, it should be so. But I remembring him to be mine owne sonne, was rather content to leese hym, then to see his bodie parted in two peeres. For true and perfect loue is neuer content with one halfe of that it dothe loue.

I had rather to weepe for my whole losse, then to recouer but one halfe. My

minde could not be satisfied, if I had recouered one halfe without life. Alas giue her rather the childe which is aliue. Better it is for me to die, then to see Iesus-Christ deuided. But O my Lorde, thou didst looke better to it then I. For thou seeing the anguish that I did suffer, & how I did rather forsake my right, then to beholde such cruelnesse. Thou saydst, this is the true mother and so causedst them to giue me my childe againe, for whome my hart was so sorowfull. O sweete Iesus, I found thee after, to haue proued me if I did loue thee. Yea, I which had lost thee, yet didst thou returne vnto me. Alas doest thou vouchsafe to come agayne to her, which being let with sinne, could not keepe thee, my sweete childe, my sonne, my helper, my nourisher, of whom I am a right humble creature. Do not permit that euer I doe leaue thee againe, for I doe repent my selfe of the time passed. 1. Cor. 4. Sapi. 3.

Now come my sensualitie with sinnes of all qualities, for thou hast no power to make me receiue the childe which is dead. The same that I haue is strong inough for to defend me, and hee shall not permitte that thou take hym awaye from

me. He is alreadie more strong then anie man is. Therefore I may sleepe and take
Esa. 32. rest neere him. For all thinges well considered, he shall keepe me much better then I could him. Then as I think I may take rest. O sweete rest of the mother and the sonne together, my sweete childe. O my God, honour and praise be vnto thee onely, so that euerie creature may see howe it hath pleased thee to call me a mother, lesse then nothing. The more that the thing is strange and hard to bee done, the more ought thy goodnesse to haue prayse for it.
Psal. 118. And also I finde my selfe more bound vnto thee then euer I did for this, that it pleaseth thee to haue retained me for thy sister.

I am sister vnto thee but so naughtie a sister, that better it were for me, that I were without the name, for I forgot the honour of adoption in so noble a kindred, and alla thy so good and brotherly behauiour towardes me. I with pride did rise against thee and (not remembring my
Num. 12. faultes, but going astray from thee, did agree with my mother Aaron, being in will to giue iudgement agaynst thy workes. Plainly I grudged agaynst thee also

also, which thing causeth me to haue a great remorse in my conscience. Alas right bountifull God, brother and true Moses, which doest all with goodnesse and iustice. I haue esteemed thy workes to be euen sinne, beeing so bold to speake euen rashly, saying. Wherefore hast thou married a strange woman? Thou giuest vs a lawe, and punishment if we doe not fulfill it. And thou wouldest not be bound to it, forbidding vs the thing, which thou thy selfe doest. Num. 12. Deut. 5.

For thou doest forbid vs to kill any man, and thou doest kil and sparest none of thee thousand, which thou causedst to to be slayne. Also God gaue vs in commandement by thee, that we should not marrie the daughter of a stranger. Yet thou takest thy wife among them. Alas my deere brother, with a great manie of such wordes, whome I knowe to be foolish, with Aaron, which is my owne wit, I impayred thee, wherof I doe repent. For the liuely voyce of God, rebukingly tooke me vp, before I went out of the place. What wouldest thou than of my sinne? Alas my brother thou wouldest not haue me punished, but rather wouldest Exod. 32. Exod. 34.

my

my ſaluation and health in aſking for me, this great benefite, that it ſhoulde pleaſe God to mittigate his iudgement. The which thing thou couldſt not obtaine. For I became a lazar, ſo that when anie bodie ſhould looke vpon me, they might well ſee that I had not bene wiſe. And ſo was I put out from the tentes and tabernacles of the people, becauſe that a ſicke body may infect them which be in health.

Numb. 12.

Oh, a ſoule cannot haue a greater puniſhment, then to be banniſhed out of the companie of them whiche are holy and good: But what didſt thou, ſeeing my repentance? Thou prouidedſt that my penaunce was ſoone at an ende, and with true loue diddeſt make meanes for me, whereupon I did returne. O what a brother would, in ſtead to puniſhe his fooliſh ſiſter, ſo naturally cleaue vnto her? For iniurie, grudge, and great offence, thou giueſt her grace and loue in recompence. Alas my brother, howe exceeding is this thy loue? Much more is it, then brotherhood is bound to giue to ſo poore and wretched a woman as I am. I haue done thee euill, and thou giueſt me good for it, I am thine, and thou ſayeſt thou art mine. Euen

Ezech. 33. 1 Iohn. 2.

Mal. 1.

so I am, and will be so for euer. I feare no more the great foolishnesse of Aaron, for no man may separate me from thee. Now that we are brother and sister together, I care verie little for all other men. Thy landes are mine owne inheritance.

Let vs then keepe (if it please thee) but one household. Sith it hath pleased thee to humble thy selfe so much, as to ioyne thy heart with mine, in making thy selfe a liuely man, I doe right heartily thanke thee: and as to doe it as I ought, it lyeth not in my small power. Take my meaning then, and excuse my ignorance, seeing I am of so great a kindred as to be thy sister. O my God, I haue good cause to loue, to praise, and to serue thee vnfaynedly, & not to feare, nor to desire any thing, saue thee onely. Keepe me well then, for I alke none other brother nor friend. If any father haue had anie pitie vpon his childe: If any mother haue taken anie care for her sonne: If anie brother haue hid the sin of his sister, it is thou. I neuer sawe (or els it was kept wondrous secret) that euer husband would thorowly forgiue his wife, after she had him once offended, and did returne vnto him.

Phila.

Hester. 14.

There

There haue bin inough of them which for to auenge their wronges, haue caused the iudges to put them to death. Other beholding their sinnes, did not spare their owne hands, so dainly to kill them. Other also seeing their faultes to appeare, did send them home agayne to their owne friendes. Some perceiuing their euill dispositions, haue shutte them vp fast in a prison. Nowe briefly to conclude vppon their diuers complexions, The end of their mercie is punishment, and the least harm that euer I could perceiue in punishing them, is this: that they would neuer see them againe. Thou shouldst rather make the skie to turne, then so to forsake thy wife for her misdoing. Wherefore my God, I can finde no man to be compared vnto thee. For of loue thou art the perfect example. Nowe my God, more then euer I did, confesse that I haue broken my othe and promise.

Hero.

Deut. 24.

Alas thou hadst chosen me for thy wife, and didst set me vp in great state and honour. For what greater honour may one haue, then to be in the place of thy wife, which sweetely taketh her rest so neere thee. O. all thy goodes, queene, maistres,

Iohn 15.

and

and lady, and also in suretie both in body and soule. Of great fauour is it, that I so vile a creature, am so ennobliſhed by thee. Now to speak it briefly. I haue more, and better then anie mortall man can deſire. Wherefore my heart hath cauſe to ſigh alwaies, and with aboundance of teares, mine eyes to come out of my head. My mouth cannot make too many exclamations. For there is neyther newe nor antient writinges, that can ſhewe ſo pitifull a caſe, as the ſame is whiche I will tell nowe. Shall, or dare I tell it? May I pronounce it without ſhame? Alas yea. For my confuſion is it not to ſhewe ỹ great loue of my huſband. Therefore I care not, if for his woorſhip I doe declare my fault. Luke 6. Pſal. 50.

O my ſauiour, whiche dyed and was crucified on the croſſe for my ſinnes. This deede is not ſuch, as a father to leaue hys ſonne, or as a childe to offend his mother, or els as a ſiſter to grudge & chide. Alas this is woorſe. For the offence is greater where more loue and knowledge is. For the more familiaritie we haue with God, and the more benefits we receiue of him, the greater is our offence when wee with Eſa.

him dissemble: Specially that I should so doe, which am called his spouse, and loued of thee as thine owne soule. Shall I tell the trueth? Yea: I haue left thee, forgotten thee, and ranne away from thee. I did leaue thee for to goe at my vaine pleasure. I forsooke thee and chose other. Yea, I refused thee, the welspring of all goodnesse and faithfull promise: I did leaue thee. But whether went I? Into a place
Iob.10. where nothing was but cursednesse.

I haue left thee my trustie friend and louer, worthie to be loued aboue all other, I haue put thee aside, O welspring of all healthsomnesse, by mine owne wretched will. Yea, I haue forsaken thee, full of bewtie, goodnesse, wisedome, and power, sought to withdrawe me from thy loue. I haue accepted thy great enemies, that is the deuill, the worlde, and the flesh, against whom thou foughtest so sore on the crosse,
Heb.12. to ouercome for my sake, to set me at libertie, which was by them of long time a prisoner, slaue, and so bound, that no man could cause me to humble my selfe. And as for the loue and charity that I should haue had towardes thee, they did quenche it so that the name of Iesus my husband,

which

which before I had found so sweete, was to me tedious and hatefull. So that oftentimes I did iest at it. And if anie man (I hearing a sermon) had sayd vnto me, the preacher saith well, I would affirme it but the word went away from me, as a fether doth in the winde. Luke 8.

I went neuer yet to the preaching, but for manner onely. All my deedes were plaine hypocrisie, for my minde was in other places. I was annoyed when I heard speake of thee, for I was more willing to goe at my pleasure. Nowe briefly to conclude, all that thou didst forbid me, I fulfilled and all that thou commandest me to doe, I did eschew. And this was the cause (my God) I did not loue thee. But yet Lord, for all this that I did hate thee, and forsake thee, ranne away from thee, and betrayed thee, should I giue thy place to another? Or hast thou suffered that I shoulde be mocked, either yet beaten or killed? Hast thou put me in darke prison, or banished me for euer, setting nought by me? Hast thou taken away thy giftes againe from me, and pretious iewels to punish me for my vnfaithfull fruits? Haue I lost my ioynter which thou didst promise Hiere. 2. Mat. 25.

me,

me, through my offence against thee? Am I accused by thee afore the eternall father, for a naughtie woman? Yea hast thou forbid me thy presence (as I deserued) and that I should neuer appeare in thy house?

O moste true husband, and pure perfite friend, the moste louing yet among all good louers. Alas thou hast done otherwise. For thou soughtest for me diligently, when I was going into the moste deepe place of hell, where all the euils are done. When I was fardest from thee both in heart and minde, and cleerely out of the true way. Then didst thou louingly call me backe, saying. My deare daughter harken, and see, and bowe thy hearing towardes me. Forget that strange nation to whome thou didst runne away, and also the house of thine olde father, where thou hast dwelt so long. Then shall the king full of all faithfulnesse, desire thy beawtie. But when thou sawest that thy sweete and gracious calling, did not profite me: then beganst thou to cry lowder. Come vnto me all you which are wearily loaden with labour: For I am he that shall plenteously refresh you and feed you with my bread of life. Alas vnto all these sweete

Luke 15.

Psalme 44.

Mat. 11.

wordes would I not hearken.
For I doubted whether it were thou, or
els a fabulous writing that so said. For I
was so foolishe, that without loue I did
read thy word. I considered not well the Esa. 5
comparison of ỹ vineyard, which brought
forth thornes and byers in stead of good
fruite, that it signified me whiche had so
done. I knowe it well inough, that when
thou diddest call the barren wife, saying. Canti. 6.
Returne Sulampte. All this diddest thou
speake, that I should forsake my sinne.
And of all these wordes did I, as though
I had vnderstoode neuer a whit. But
when I did peruse Hieremie the prophet,
I confesse that I had in the reading ther-
of, feare in my heart, and bashfulnesse in
my face. I will tell it, yea with teares in
mine eyes, and all for thy honour, and to
suppresse my pride. Thou hast sayde by
that holy Prophet, if a woman hath of-
fended her husband, and so is left of him Hiere. 3.
for going astray with other. Namely if
he thereupon refuseth her for euer: is she
not to bee esteemed polluted, and of no
value?

The lawe doth consent to put her in the
handes of iustice, or to depriue her away

and so neuer to see or to take her againe. Thou hast made the separation from my bed (saith he vnto me) and placed forraine louers in my roome, committing with them fornication: Yet for all this thou mayest returne vnto me againe. For I will not alwaies be angrie against thee. Lift vp thine eyes, and looke about thee on euerie side. Then shalt thou well see, into what place thy sin hath led thee, and how thou lyest down in the earth O poore soule, looke where thy sinne hath put thee. Euen vpon the high wayes, where thou didst waite, and tarry for to beguile them that came by, euen as a theefe doth which is hidden in the wildernesse: Therefore thou in fulfilling thy wicked pleasure, hast with fornication infected all the earthe, whiche was about thee. Thine eye, thy forehead, and thy face haue lost all their honest good maner. For they were suche as an harlot hath, and yet thou hadst no shame of thy sinne.

Ezech. 18.

Hiere. 30.

And the surplus that Hieremie saith, constraineth me to knowe my wretched life, and to wish with sorrowfull sighes, the houre, the day, the moneth, the tyme, and the yeare, that I did leaue it, yeelding

Iob. 10.

my

my selfe condemned, and worthy to be for euer in the euerlasting fire. The same feare whiche doth not of me, but of thee procede, and exceedeth many of thy other gifies, put me rather in hope thē dispaire, as often as I did remember my sinne. For as soone as thou knowest my will bowing vnder thy obedience, then putting in me a liuely faith, thou diddest vse great clemencie. So that after I knewe thee to be that Lord, maister, and king, whome I ought to haue feared: Then found I my feare not quenched, but mixed with loue, beleeuing that thou wert so gracious, gentle, and sweete, and so pittifull an husband, that I which should rather haue hidd me, then to haue shewed my self, was not then in feare to goe forth, and to looke for thee. And in so seeking I found thee. Hab. 11.

But what diddst thou then? Hast thou refused me? Alas my God, no, but rather hast excused me. Hast thou turned thy face from me? No, for thine eye so sweete did penetrate my heart, wounding it almost to the deathe, and giuing me remorse of my sinnes. Thou hast not put me backe with thy hand, but with both thy armes Psal. 9. Canti. 4.

and with a sweete, and manly heart thou
didst meete with me by the way, and not
once reprouing my faultes, embracedst
me. I could not see in beholding thy coun-
tenance, that euer thou didst once perceiue
mine offence. For thou hast done asmuch
for me, as though I had bene good and
honest. For thou didst hide my fault from
euery body, in giuing me againe the part
Rom. 8. of thy bedde, and also in shewing that the
multitude of my sinnes are so hyden and
ouercome by thy great victorie, that thou
wilt neuer remember them. So that now
thou seest nothing in me, but the graces,
giftes, and vertues which hath pleased thy
free goodnesse to giue me.

O charitie most pretious. I doe see
Esai. 24. well that thy goodnesse doth consume my
lewdnesse, and maketh me a new, godly
and beautifull creature. The euill that
was mine, thou hast destroyed, and made
me so perfite a creature, that all the good
which a husband can doe vnto his wife
thou hast done it to me, in giuing me a
faithfull hope in thy promises. Now haue
I through thy good grace recouered the
place of thy wife. O happie and desired
place, gracious bed, throne, right honour-
able,

rable, seate of peace, rest from all warre, high sleepe of honour, separate from the earth. Doest thou receiue this vnworthy creature, giuing her the scepter and Crowne of thy Empyre and glorious realme? who did euer heare speake of suche a storie, as to raise vp one so high, which of her selfe was nothing, and maketh of great value, that of it selfe was nought? Math. 11.

Alas, what is this? for I casting mine eyes on high, did see thy goodnesse, so vnknowne, grace and loue so incomprehensible that my sight is woonderfull. Then am I constrained to looke downe, and in so looking downeward, I do see what I am, and what I was willing to be. Alas I doe see in it, the lewdnesse, darkenesse, and extreame deepenesse of my euill. My death which by humblenesse closeth myne eie. The admirable goodnesse of thee, and the vnspeakeable euil which is in me, Thy right highnesse & pure maiestie, my right fragile and mortall nature, Thy gifts, goodes, and beatitude, my malice & great vnkindnesse. O howe good thou art vnto me, and how vnkind am I to thee? This that thou wilt, and this that I pursue. Iohn. 3. Sapi. 14.

Which thing considered, causeth me to maruell, howe it pleaseth thee to ioyne thy selfe to me, seeing there is no comparison betweene vs both.

Thou art my God, & I am thy worke, thou art my creator, and I thy creature. Esa.64. Now to speake briefly, though I cannot define what it is to be of thee, yet knowe I my selfe to bee the least thing that may be compared vnto thee. O loue, thou madest this agreement, when thou didst ioyne life and death together. But the vnion hath made aliue deathe. Life dying, and life without end, hath made our death a life. Death hath giuen vnto vs a quickenesse. Through such deathe I being dead, receiued life, and by death I am rauished with him whiche is aliue. Coloss.2, I liue in thee, and as for me, of my selfe I am dead. And as concerning the bodily death, it is nothing els vnto mee, but a comming out of prison. Death is life vnto mee. For through deathe, I am aliue. This mortall life filleth me full of care, and sorowe, and death yeeldeth me content.

O what a goodly thing it is to dye, Apoca.14. which cause my soule to liue. In deliue-

ring

ting her from this mortall death, it excepteth her from the deathe miserable, and matcheth her with a moste mightie louer. And vnlesse she thus dieth she languisheth alwaies. Is not then the soule blameless, which woulde faine die for to haue suche life? Yes truely, and shee ought to call death her welbeloued friend. O sweete deathe, pleasaunt sorowe, mightie key deliuering from all wickednesse. Those which trusted in thee (O Lord) and in thy death, were mortified, because they did trust in thee, and in thy passion. For with a sweete sleepe thou didst put them out of that death which causeth many to lament. O howe happie is the same sleepe vnto him, which when he awaketh, doth finde through thy death, the life euerlasting. For the deathe is none other thing to a christian man, but a libertie or deliuerance from his mortall band. Rom. 8.

And the death which is fearefull to the wicked, is pleasaunt and acceptable to them that are good. Then is death thorowe thy deathe destroyed. Therefore my God, if I were rightly taught, I shoulde call the deathe life, and this life death, ende of labour, and beginning Rom. 7.

of euerlasting ioy. For I knowe that the
long life doth let me from thy sight. O
Isal.35. deathe, come, and breake the same ob-
stacle of life. Or els loue, doe a myracle
now, sith that I cannot yet see my spouse:
Transforme me with him, both body and
soule, and then shall I the better tarrie for
the comming of death. Let me die, that
I may liue with him. For there is none
Iohn.15. that can helpe, vnlesse it be thee onely. O
my sauiour, through faith I am planted,
and ioyned with thee. O what vnion is
this, sith that through faith I am sure of
thee. And I may call thee, father, mo-
ther, sonne, and husband. O what giftes
thou doest giue, by the goodnesse of those
names.

O my father, what paternitie, O my
mother what fraternitie, O my childe,
what dilection, O my spouse, what con-
iunction is this? Father full of humilitie,
Apoca.12. Brother hauing our similitude, Sonne en-
gendred through faith, and loue, Husband
louing, and relieuing in all extremitie.
But whome doest thou loue? Alas it is
the whome thou hast withdrawne from
the snare, wherein, through malice thee
was bound, and put here in place, name,

and

and office of a daughter, sister, or mother, and wife. O my sauior, the same is a great sauour of sweetenesse, right pleasant, and delectable: when a man after the hearing of thy word, shall call thee without feare, his father, brother, childe, and spouse. I, in hearing that word, doe perceiue my selfe to be called there thy mother, sister, daughter, and spouse. Alas the soule which doth finde such sweetenesse, may consume, and burne for loue. Luke 8.

Is there any loue, vnlesse it be this, but it hath some euill condition? Is there any pleasure to be heere esteemed? Is there any honor, but may be accompted shame, to this compared? Yea, is there any profite equall to this? Moreouer to conclude it briefly. Is there any thing that I could more earnestly loue? Alas no. For he that vnfainedly loueth God, reputeth all these thinges worldly, of lesse value then the dunghill. Pleasure, profite, honour of this worlde, are all but vaine trifles vnto him whiche hath found God. Such loue is so profitable, honourable, and aboundant, that (I dare say) shee onely sufficeth the heart of a godly man, and perfecteth hym so content, that hee John 14. 2. Cor. 3.

neuer

neuer desireth or would haue other. For whosoeuer hath God, as wee ought to haue him, accompteth all other thinges superfluous or vaine.

Nowe thanked be the Lord, through faith haue I gotten the same loue, wherefore I ought to be satisfied and content. Now haue I thee my father, for defence of my long youth from wanton foolishnesse. Now haue I thee my brother for to succour my sorrowes wherein I find none end. Now haue I thee my sonne, for my feeble age as onely staye. Nowe haue I thee a true and faithfull husband, for the satisfieng of my whole heart. Nowe sith that I haue thee, I doe forsake all them that are in the world. Sith I holde thee, thou shalt escape me no more. Seeing that I see thee, I will looke vpon none other thing that might keep me backe from the beholding of thy diuinitie. Seeing that I doe heare thee, I will heare nothyng that letteth me from the fruition of thy voyce. Sith that I may freely talke with thee, I will common with none other. Seeing it pleaseth thee to put me so neere thee, I will rather dye then to touche anie other: Seeing that I serue

Phil. 1.

Esa. 55.
Iohn 10.

thee,

thee, I will serue none other mayster.

Seeing that thou hast ioyned thy heart with mine, if he depart from thine, let him be punished for euer. For the departing from thy loue is harder, then is any damnation. I doe not feare the paine of tenne thousand helles, so muche as I doe feare the once loosing of thee. Alas my God, my father, and creator, doe not suffer that the enemie, inuenter of all sinne, haue such power, that he make me to leese thy presence. For whosoeuer hath once felt the losse of thy loue, hee shall saye that hee woulde rather bee bound for euer in hell, then to feele the paine that one shall haue by the losse of the same thy loue one moment of time. O my sauour, doe not permit that euer I depart from thee. But if it please thee, put me in such a place, that my soule through wantonnesse of sinne be neuer separated from thy loue.

2 Thes. 2.

Exod. 15.

In this worlde I cannot haue perfectly this my desire. Whiche thinge considered maketh me feruently and withall my heart, to desire the departing from this bodye of sinne, not fearyng the death nor yet anie of her instrumentes For what feare ought I to haue of my

Rom. 7.

God

Heb. 9. God, which through loue offered himselfe and suffered death, not of debt or duetie, but because hee would for my onely sake vndoe the power that mortall death had. Now is Iesus dead, in whome we are all dead, and through his death hee causeth euerie man to liue againe. I meane those which through fayth are partakers of hys passion. For euen as the deathe before the great miserie of the crosse, was hard to euerie body, and there was no man but was feared therewith, considering the copulation of the body and the soule, their order, loue, and agreement, so were their sorrowes extreame in the departing of the one from the other.

Eccle. 41.

But since it hath pleased the sweete lambe to offer himselfe vppon the crosse, his great loue hath kindled a fire within the heart so vehement, that euery true beleeuer esteemeth the passage of death but a playe or pastime, and so prouoketh other constantly in his trueth to dye. And euen as the feare of death did retarde vs, so ought loue to giue vs a desire to die. For if true loue be vnfaignedly within the hart of a man, hee can feele none other thing, because that loue is so strong of it self, that

Sapi. 3.

shee

thee keepeth all the roome, and putteth out all other desires, not suffering ane thing there but God onely. For wherso- 1.Iohn 4.
euer true and perfite loue is, we doe neyther remember feare, nor yet sorrow.

If our owne pryde for to attaine honor, maketh vs to seeke death, so many strange waies. As if for to haue a foolishe pleasure, a man putteth himselfe in ieopardie of life. If a marchaunt to obtaine riches, doth indanger himselfe, sometime for the value of a shilling. If the first conceiuing of robberie or murther, cruelrie or deceite, doth so blinde a man, that he doubteth nothing the danger of death, neither yet misfortune when he seeketh to auenge himselfe or doth ane other euill. If the furie of sickenesse, or the rankenesse of malancholy causeth a creature fearcely to wish for death, and oftentimes to drown, hang, or kill themselues. For such euilles are sometimes so great that they cause their pained patientes to chose death for libertie. If it so be then that these paynes full of euill, and imperfections, causeth them not to feare the hazard of death, but Deut. 16.
rather to thinke that deathe tarryeth too long.

Alas

Alas what ought true and lawdable loue to doe? what ought the loue of the eternall father to wilhe? Shoulde shee stirre a hearte in such wise, that he beeing transported with such affection, shoulde feele none other thinge in him? Alas yea. For death is a pleasaunte thinge to the soule: which is in loue with God, and esteemeth the passage easye, through the which shee commeth out of prison. For the hard waye, where through shee commeth, can not wearye her for to embrace her husband. O my sauiour, how good is the same deathe, through whome we shal haue the ende of all sorrowes? By whome I shall enioy thy sight without impediment, and be transformed into the likenesse of thy maiestie?

Rom. 8.

2. Cor. 3.

O death, through thy deede I trust to haue such honour, as vppon my knees with crying and weeping, I doe dayly desire. Therefore come quickly, and make an end of my sorrowes. O happie daughters, right holy soules ioyned to the citie Hierusalem, open your eyes and with pitie looke vpon my desolation. I beseech you that in my name ye doe shewe vnto my best beloued, my God, friend and king, how

Cant. 5.

how at euerie houre of the day, I doe languish for his loue. O sweete death, thorow suche loue come vnto me, and with loue bring me vnto my Lord God. O deathe where is thy sting and darte. Alas they are bannished from mine eyes, for rygour is chaunged into sweetnesse seeing that my friend did suffer deathe vppon the crosse for my sake. His deathe incourage my heart, that thou wert woondrous gentle to mee, if I might follow him. 1. Cor. 15.

O deathe, I beseeche thee come to put the friend with his loue, Nowe sith that death is so pleasant a life, that shee pleaseth me more than feareth me: then ought I to feare nothing but the right iudgement of God, All my sinnes with his iust ballance shalbe wayed and shewed openly. This that I haue done, also my thought and woorde shall be better knowne, then if they were written in a rolle. And wee may not thinke that charitie would offend iustice & truth. For whosoeuer doth liue vnfaithfully, shall be punished in euerlasting payne. God is iust and his iudgement is righteous. All that hee doothe is perfite in all thinges. Alas who et Apoc. 20. Psal. 118.

am

am I considering my righteousnesse, I wretched and poore creature?

I know that all the workes of iust men are so full of imperfection, that afore god they are more filthy then mire or any other vilenesse. What will it be then concerning the sinnes whiche I doe commit, whereof I feele the burden importable? I can saye nothing else but that I haue wonne by them damnation. Is this the end? Shall dispayre then be the comfort of my great ignorance? Alas my God no. For the inuisible faith causeth me to beleeue, that all thinges which are impossible to men, are possible vnto thee. So that thou doe conuerte my worke, which is nothing, into some good worke of thine in me, which is specially faith. Then my Lord, who shall condemne me, and what iudge will dampne me, sith that he whiche is giuen me for a iudge, is my spouse, my father, and refuge? Alas what father? Such as doth neuer condemne hys childe, but alwaies doth excuse and defend hym?

Esa. 64.

Heb, 11,

Luke 18,

Iohn 6,

Then I perceiue to haue none other accuser but Iesus Christ, which is my redeemer, whose deathe hath restored vs our lost inheritance. For he made himselfe

1, Iohn 2,

our

our man of lawe, shewing his so worthy mercies afore God, wherewith my great debt is so abundantly recompenced, that in iudgement it is accompted for nothing. O redeemer, here is a great loue: Wee finde but fewe suche men of lawe. Sweet Iesus Christ, it is vnto thee that I am a debter, yet doest thou both pray, and speake for me. And moreouer when thou doest see that I am poore, with the abundance of thy goodes thou doest pay my debt, O incomprehensible sea of all goodnesse, O my father, doest thou vouchsafe to be my iudge, nor willing the death of a sinner? O Iesus Christ, true father, and sauiour of the soule, friend aboue all friendes. For thou being my man of law didst excuse and speake for me, where thou couldest iustly haue accused me. Math. 18. Colos. 8.

I feare no more to be vndone by anie man, for the law is satisfied by thee for all. My sweete spouse hath made the payment so abundant, that the lawe can aske nothing of me but is payd of him. For as I beleeue, hee hath taken all my sinnes vpon him, and hath giuen me in place for them, his owne goods in abundance. O my sauiour, presenting thy vertues, thou doest Esay 53.

content the law. When she will reproche me of my sinnes, thou doest shew her how willingly in thine owne flesh, thou hast taken the discharge of them, through the coniunction of our marriage. Also vpon the crosse through thy passion, thou hast made satisfaction for it. Moreouer thy onely charitie hath giuen me this, that thou hast for me deserued. Therfore seing the merite to be mine, the law can ask nothing of me. Then will I feare no more ỹ iudgment, but with desire rather then perforce, I doe tarrie for the time that I shal see my iudge, and heare a iust iudgement of him.

1. Pet. 2. 1. Iohn 4.

Yet I knowe that thy iudgement is so iust, that there is no fault therein, and that my infidelitie is worthie to suffer the cruelnesse of hell. For if I doe onely consider my deseruing, I can see nothing in it that can keepe me from the fire of hell. True it is, that the torment of hell was neuer prepared but for the deuill, and not for reasonable men. Neuertheless if anie man haue set in his minde to be like to the deuill, then ought hee as the deuill to be paid with a like reward. But if a man through contemplation of the soule, doe

Psal. 118.

Math. 25.

hold

holde of thee, his Angell of counsell, vertue, goodnesse and perfection, hee is sure to obtaine heauen, which is a place of thy deseruing for him. Then shall the vicious bee punished with the same, to whome they ioyned themselues. For sith that they followed Sathan, they must holde suche place as is for him and his aungels prepared. Luke 13.

Nowe I considering the diuersitie of both the sortes, am little comforted in spirite by this. For I cannot denie but I am more like the Deuill then the Angell of light, wherefore I feare and tremble. For the life of the Angel is so pure, and myne so vnpure, that I am nothing like vnto him, this doe I confesse. But to the other I am so like in my doings, and so accustomed in his waies, that of his paine and torment I ought to be partaker. For the cruell sinne whiche hath bound me in hell, is so great, and his force so strong, that it letteth nothing to come from it, neyther feareth it the contrary assault of any man. But hee whiche is in this kinde strong, knoweth not how his strēgth goeth away when a stronger than he commeth. Sin is Heb. 1. Luke 11.

strong which bringeth vs to hell.

And I coulde neuer yet see, that anie man by merite or paine taking, could euer yet vanquish that hell, saue onely he which did ỹ great assault through his vnspeakeable charitie, when hee humbled himselfe to the crosse. Whereby he hath ouercome his enemie, broken hell and his power, so that it hath no farther strength to keepe anie soule prisoner, that hath put her trust in God. Then beleeuing in the great strength that he hath, I doe not set by hel and sinne, no not so muche as a strawe. So that sinne can neuer haue hold of me, vnlesse it be for to shew how my God is mercifull, strong, mightie, and a puissant vanquisher of all the euilles, which were within my heart. If my sinne forgiuen, is the glorie of my most louing sauiour: I ought also to beleue, that my glorie is increased therewith, seeing that I am planted or engrafted in him.

Phil. 2, 1. Cor. 19.

Rom. 5.

His honour onely doth honour all hys, and his riches doth replenishe euerie one of his with his goodes. Then death, hell, and sinne are ouercome by him, O glutenous hell, where is thy defence? Thou

Apoc. 5.

1. Cor. 15.

cruell

cruell villaine sinne, where is thy tyrannous power? O death where is thy sting and victorie, which are so muche spoken of? Instead of death, thou death giuest vs vs life, and so doest thou contrarie to thy will. Also thou sinne which couetest to drawe eche creature to damnation, thou giuest vs a ladder to reache thereby that goodly citie Hierusalem. Yet wouldest thou of thy cursed nature that our eternall maker shoulde loose his creature. But through his loue and grace, the ioy remembraunce of thy vncomelinesse, doth cause her by repentance to come agayne, and submit her selfe vnto God more then euer she did. His inestimable goodnesse causeth thee to lose the whole labor, which thou takest all thee weeke. Apoc. 12.

Therfore hell hath not had al the number that hee did pretend to haue, because that the solacious shadowe and power of his passion, is such a mightie protection to the soule, that she thereby needeth neither to doubt deathe, sinne, nor hell. Is there anye thing to pull mee backe if God bee willing through his gifte of faith to drawe mee to him? I meane suche faith as wee must needes haue to obtaine Osee. 13. Iohn. 6.

obtaine the high graces from aboue, and also suche faith as through charitie doth ioyne the humble seruant to his maker. I being ioyned vnto him, ought to haue no feare of trauaile, paine, nor sorrow. For whosoeuer doth willingly suffer anie maner of death or sorrowe for the truth, as did Christ, he doth feele in suche torment great consolation for his soule, knowing that as for my selfe, I am weake, and with God I am right strong.

Math.1.

Through his comforte I may doe all thinges. For hys loue is so constant and permanent that it varieth not for anye worldly thing. Who can then withdraw me from his grace? Surely not the great height of heauen, nor the deepenesse of hell, not the breadth of the whole earthe, neyther death nor sinne, whiche doeth warre euerie day against me, can separate me one minute from the great loue and charitie, that my heauenly father throwe Iesus Christ hath vnto mee. His goodnesse is suche, that hee loueth me whiche haue not at all times loued him. And if I now loue him, they shall I feele his loue to increase in mee. But because that my loue is not worthie to loue him, I

Rom.8.

1.Iohn 4.

desire his loue to be mine, the which Ie feele suche as though it were mine owne His desire is to loue, and through his loue hee causeth my heart to bee inflamed with loue.

And through such loue hee findeth hym selfe so welbeloued, that his owne deede yeeldeth him well content, and not my loue or strength: Contenting his selfe, his loue doth increase more in me, then I can of him desire. O true louer, fountaine, or welspring of all charitie, and onely purse of the heauenly treasure. Ought I to thinke or dare say what thou art? May I write it, or can anie mortall man comprehend this goodnesse and loue? And if thou print in any mans heart, can hee expresse it? No surely. For the capacitie of no man can comprehend the vnmeasurable goodnesses which are in thee, for naturall reason, doth shewe vs howe there is no comparison betweene an eternall and a mortal thing. But when through loue the mortall is ioyned with the eternall, the mortall thing is so fulfilled with the eternall, that it cannot finde the end thereof. For it hath in it more good thereby, then it can containe or hold. Iohn 13. Rom. 1. Ephes 2.

Therfore

Therefore doth a man thinke, which hath the loue of God, that he hath all the goodes in the worlde therewith. Euen as wee see the sunne with one only sparkel of his light doth binde the eye, and yet doeth shee with holde her great light. But aske the eye what hee hath seene, and hee will saye that hee hath beholden the whole bryghtnesse of the sunne. But that is a greate lye. For hee being dimmed with a little sparkle, coulde not see the whole clearenesse thereof. And neuertheleſſe, he is so content, that it seemeth vnto him as though he had so much light as the sunne conteyneth. Yet if hee had more then the sayde sparkle, hee were not able to suffer it. Euen so the soule which through faythe doeth feele one sparkle of the loue of God, doeth finde therewith the heate so greate and maruaylous, so sweete and delicyous, that it is impossible for her to declare what thing the same loue is.

Rom. 8.

Eccles. 10.

Psal. 118.

For a little thereof that shee hath felte doeth yeelde her mynde satisfyed, and desiryng of more whereof she hath enough. So doeth shee liue languishing and sighing. The heart doeth feele well, that hee hath receyued too much, but hee hath con-

conceyued suche desyre in this too much, that hee alwayes desireth to receyue the thinge which hee can not haue, neyther is hee worthye to receyue it. Hee knoweth the good that hee hath alreadye to bee vnspeakeable, and yet would he haue more of that whereof he can not skille. Truly, he can not feele or thinke the good which is in him. Then lyeth it not in my power to tell what thinge the loue of God is, sith that I haue no knowledge of the feruentnesse therof. He that thinketh to haue all this loue within his heart, cannot truly declare what thing it is. Happy is hee which hath such aboundaunce of this loue, that he may say, My God, I haue eough of it. Phil.1. 1.Ihon.4.

He which hath this loue within him, dareth not muche boaste, leaste in muche speaking, hee loose it, vnlesse it be to edefy hys neyghbour vnto saluation. The impossibilitye then of the declaration of this loue, shal make me to holde my pace. For there is no Saynte so perfite, if hee will speake of the loue of the high God, of his Goodnesse, Sweetnesse, Graces, and of all thinges elle which pertayneth to him, but lookinge alowe shall fynde Iaco.3. Apoc.3.

him

himselfe vnworthy, and so stop his mouth. I then a worme of the earth, lesse then nothing, ought to cease and not to speake of the incomparable highnesse of this loue. Yet were it too muche vnkindnesse to be noted in me, if I had written nothing, hauing that done vnto me, which woulde satisfie a muche better witnesse then mine is. For hee that would hide the goodnesse of God, so good a matter, should commit a sinne worthie to bee punished with the euerlasting paine.

Math. 25.

Therfore, O happie Paule, which hast so much of the same sweete honnie, being blinded for the space of three dayes, and rapt vp into the third heauen. Now I beseeche thee, satisfie my ignorance, and saule, and tell me what in suche vision thou hast seene. Harken then what he saith. O the vnspeakable highnesse of the aboundant riches or treasure both of the wisedome and knowledge of God. Howe incomprehensible are his iudgementes and howe vnsearchable his waies vnto our weake wittes? O holy Paule, thy words causeth vs much to maruaile, that thou hauing knowledge of so heauenly secretes, wouldest speak no further in them. At the

2. Cor. 12.

Rom 11.

Sapi. 17.

least

least you tell vs, what thing we may hope to haue one day through such godly loue. Giue eare and ponder the wordes that hee saith.

Neyther hath the eye seene, nor yet the eare heard, neyther yet hath it euer entered into the heart of any man, what God hath prepared for them that loue him. And would he speake it no further? No truely. Yet all this that he saith here, is for none other purpose, but to prouoke vs earnestly to loue. Hee willeth vs also thereuntō to esteeme, that he neither can declare, nor yet name it, and so to giue forth our hearts to patience and hope of that thing which neuer man yet could see, neyther yet vnderstand, what though many through loue for it haue died. O excellent gift of faith whereof so much good commeth, that it enableth man to possesse the thing which he cannot comprehend. Faith ioyned with the truely, bringeth forth hope, whereby perfect charitie is ingendred. And charitie is God, as thou knowest. If we haue charitie, then we haue also God therewith. 1:Cor:2. Esay.64. Rom:8.

Then is God in vs, and we are in him, And all this commeth through the benefite of fayth. For hee dwelleth in all men which Iohn:4.

which haue true fayth. Thus haue wee a greater treasure then we can tell of, or yet any man expresse vnto vs. Now to conclude, Syth that so greate an Apostle as Sayncte Paule is, will speake no further of God and his inestimable loue, according to his rychteous example and doctryne, Rom. 11. I will holde my peace and be still, following neuertheless his teachinges. Notwithstanding yet, though herein I acknowledge my selfe but earth and dust, yet maye I not fayle to yelde thankes vnto my eternal liuyng God, for such greate graces and benefites as it hath pleased him to giue mee. Vnto that euerlasting 1. Tim. 1. Kinge of heauen, immortall, inuysible, incomprehensible, myghty and wise only, be all honour, prayse, glorye, magnyficence, and loue for euer and euer. Amen.

These iiii. clauses of sacred scripture, added my Lady Elizabeth vnto the beginning and end of her booke, and therefore I haue here regestred them in the order.

Eccle. 25.

There is not a more wicked head then the head of a serpent, and there is no wrath

aboue

aboue the wrath of a woman.

Eccle. 25.

But he that hath gotten a vertuous woman, hath gotten a goodly possession. She is vnto him an helpe and piller, whereupon he resteth.

Eccle. 25.

It were better to dwell with a lyon and dragon, then to kepe house with a wicked wife.

Eccle. 7.

Yet depart not from a discrete and good woman, that is fallen vnto thee for thy portion in the feare of the Lorde, for the guift of her honesty is aboue golde.

CErtaine and sure am I (moste gentle reader) ỳ all they which shall perule this godly book, shal not therwith be pleased. For among feeders are alwaies sundrie appetites, and in great assemblies of people, diuers and variant iudgementes. As the saying is, so manie heades, so many wits. Neither fine painted speech, wisedom of this world, nor yet religious hypocrisie (which for priuate commoditie many men seeketh) are heerein to be looked for. And a reason why, for he ỳ is here familiarly conuersed with, regardeth no curiositie, but plainnesse & trueth. He refuseth no sinner, but is well contented at all times to heare his homely tale. Hide not thy self from me (saith he) when thou hast done amisse, but come boldly face to face, and common the matter with me. If thy sinnes be so red as scarlet, I shall make them whiter then the Snowe. And though thy facts be as the purple, yet shall they appeare so white as the wooll. Esa. 1. For as truely as I liue (saith he) no pleasure haue I in the deathe of a sinner,

Appetites.

Sinner.

The Lord.

but

but will much rather that he turne and be saued. (Ezech. 33.)

If the humble speech here do too much offend, consider it to be the worke of a woman, as she in the beginning therof, hath most meekely desired. And yet of none other woman, thē was most godly minded. Marke Dauid in the Psalter, whiche was a man both wise and learned, and ye shall finde his maner in speaking not onely vnlike to this. Faith (Saint Paul saith) standeth not in flowishing eloquence, neyther yet in mans pollitique wisedome, but in the grace and power of God. (1. Cor. 2.) If the often repeating of some one sentence, engendreth a tedious wearinesse to the reader, let him well peruse the holy workes of S. Iohn the Euangelist, and I doubt it not but he shall finde there ỹ same maner of writing. And his occasion is (as all the chiefe writers affirme) the necessarie marking of the preceptes of health, or of matter chiefly concerning the soules saluation. For a thing twise or thrise spoken, entreth much more dayly into the remembrance then that is uttered but once.

Dauid.

S: Iohn.

And as touchyng the portion that my Lady Elizabeth, the Kinges most noble

Lady Elizabeth.

noble sister hath therin, which is her translation. Theislie haue she done it for her owne exercise in the frenche tongue, beside the spirituall exercise of her inward soule with God. As a diligent and profitable Bee hath shee gathered of this flower sweetnesse both wayes, and of this booke consolation in the spirite. And thinking that other might doe the same, of a most free christyan hearte, shee maketh it here common vnto them, not being a niggarde ouer the treasure of God. Mat. 25. The

Her first fruit.

first fruite is it of her younge, tender, and innocent labours. For I thinke she was not full out thirteene yeares of age at the finishing thereof. Shee haue not doone herein as did the religious and annoynted Hipocrites in Monastaries, Couentes and Colledges, in sparing their Libraries

Lybraries,

from men studious, and in reserving the treasuree contayned in their bookes, to most vile dusste and wormes. But like as God hath graciously giuen it, so doth she again most freely distribute it.

Such noble begynninges are neither to be rekoned childish nor babeish, though shee were a Babe in yeares, that hath

The aged,

here giuen them. Seldome finde we them

that

that in the closing vp of their withered age, doe minister like fruites of vertue. An instance I warme behold we of olde doting dawdes and beastes, that with consciences lopen with sinne (as S. Paule reporteth them) taketh euery painted stocke and stone for their God, besides the small breeues that their lecherous chaplaines hath blowne vpon. They shall not be vnwise, that shall marke herein, what commoditie it is, or what profite might grow to a christian cõmonwealth, if youth were thus brought vp in vertue and good letters. If suche fruites come forward in childhood, what will follow and appeare when discretion and yeares shall be more ripe and antient? A moste manifest signe of Godlinesse is it in the friendes, where youth is thus instituted, and a token of woonderfull faythfull diligence, in the studious teachers, tutors, and dayly lookers on. The aged. youth. Tutors.

Nobilitie whiche shee hath gotten of bloud in the high degree, hauing a moste victorious king to her father, and a moste vertuous, and learned king againe to her brother, is not in the earely spring distayned with wanton ignorance, neyther

Learned. yet blemished with the common vices of dissolute youth. But moste plenteously adorned with all kindes of languages learninges, and vertues, to hold it still in right course. The translation of this worke, were evidence strong inough, if I had not els to laye for the matter. But marke yet another muche more effectuall and cleere, at which not a fewe learned men in Germanie haue woondered. In foure noble languages, Latine, Greeke, French, and Italian, wrote she vnto me these clauses following. Which I haue added to this booke, not onely in commendation of her learned youth, but also as an example to be followed of other noble men and women, concerning their children. The written clauses are these, which she wrote first with her owne hand, muche more finely then I coulde with anie printing letter set them forth.

Clauses added.

Latyne. Stultus dixit in corde suo, non est deus. Illi corrupti sunt, & abhominabiles in sua impietate, nullus est qui aliquid boni facit.

French. Le fol disoit en son coeur, il n'a nul dieu.

Ilz sont corrumpus & sont abhominables, en leur impiete, il n'a nul qui face bien.

Is stulto disse vel suo core, non v'è alcuno Dio. Corrutti sono & abhominabile nella loro impieta, nissuno è buono. Italian.

Ton theon phoboun, tous de goneis tima, tous de Philous æschynon. Greeke.

The first clause in the three languages, Latine, French, and Italian, comprehendeth this onely sentence, as I shewed afore in the Epistle dedicatorie.

The foole saith in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt they are, and abhominable in their wickednesse (or blasphemies agaynst God) not one of them doth good Antichrist his clergie.

The Greeke clause is thus to be Englished.

Feare God, honour thy parentes, and reuerence thy friendes. Christian.

Thus haue the giuen vs counsel, both to goe and to come, to leaue and to take. To

The pope. decline from the euill, and to doe that is good. (Psal. 36.) To flee from Antichrist and his great body of sinne or blasphemous cruell clergie, and to returne to God by a perfite feare, honour, and loue. So liuely Apothegmes, or briefe & quicke sentences, respecting christianitie, haue seldome come from women. I haue searched Plutarchus, Boccatius, Bergomas, Textor, and Lander of Bonony, whiche all wrote of the vertues and worthy actes of women. But among them al haue I found no counsels so necessarie, to the common wealth of our christianitie. I denie it not, but excellent thinges they uttered, & matters of wisedome woonderfull, concerning mortall vertues. But these most highly respecte the kingdome of faith and regiment of the soule, which Iesus Christ the eternall sonne of God, from heauen by his doctrine & death so busily sought to cleere. Many graue sentences had they concerning priuate causes. But vniuersally these are for all sortes of people, high, lowe, hayle, sicke, riche, poore, learned, and vnlearned, that mindeth to haue freedome by Christs deadly sufferings, or to be deliuered from hell, sinne, death, & the deuill, by

Writers.

Women.

All sortes.

by the price of his nations blood.

No Realme vnder the skie hathe had more noble women, nor of more excellent graces, then haue this realm of England, both in the dayes of the Brittaynes, and since the English Saxons obtained it by valiant conquest. Guendolena the wife of Locrinus the second king of Brittaine, being vnlawfully diuorced from him for the pleasure of an whore, whome hee long afore had kept, tryed it with him by dint of the sworde, had the victorie, and raigned after him as king the space of xv. yeares, till her sonne Madan came to lawfull age. Cordilla the daughter of king Leyer, and least of all her sisters, when her father was deposed, and cruelly driuen out of his land, she returned, conforted, and restored him againe to his princely honour, and raigned alone after his death, for the space of fiue yeares. Cambra the daughter of king Belyne, and wife to Antenor king of France, did not onely excede in beautie, but also in wisedome. Inlomuch that shee first instructed the noble men howe to build Cities, Castels, and other strong holdes, the common people more ciuilly maners, and the women a more comely

Guendolena.

Cordilla.

Cambra.

decking of their heades. She made their
Lawes. cruell lawes, which vppon her name were
called Leges Scrambrorum. She taught
them to sowe flaxe and hempe, to water
it, dry it, dresse it, spinne it, weaue it, whi-
ten it, and fashion it, to all maner of vse for
the body.

Martia the wife of king Guythelyne,
Martia. a lady exceedingly fayre, wise, and learned
in all the liberall sciences, inuented things
woonderfull by the high practise of her
wit. After the death of her husband she
raigned seuen yeares as king, till Sicili-
us her sonne came to age. She redressed
the common wealth, reformed the grosse
maners of the people, and made most ho-
nest lawes, called of her name, Leges
Martiane. So delighted the French king
Nicanor in the wisedome, learning, and
comely maners of his wife Constantia,
Constantia. the daughter of king Eliodorus, that hee
not onely holpe her brother Carrucius in
sea battayle against ỹ king of Orchades,
but also sent his most deere sonne Pyramus
into Britaine to haue the self same bring-
ing vp. The Scottishe king Finnanus,
thought his princely honour muste glo-
riously increased, as hee hadde obtayned

Agasia

Agasia the daughter of king Blegabridus, to be coupled in mariage with Dorstus his sonne, for the manifolde graces that he beheld in her. What though the sayd ungratious Dorstus, in spight of the Britaynes, did afterward vse her moste wickedly. Bundwyca a woman both high of stature, and stomacke, also of moste noble lynage among the Brittaines, perceiuing the hauocke whiche the Romanes dayly made in the land, with great puissance of worthie warriours shee inuaded them, slew them, hung vp theyr captains, and followed the remnant of them to the verie Alpes of Italy: Where at the latter by reason of dayly labours, shee sickened and so dyed, euen the verie glory of women, saith Ponticus Virunnius. Bundwyca.

Voada the first wife of king Arviragus, a woman of woonderfull force and hart, strongly armed her selfe, her two daughters, and 6. thousand women more of the Britannish bloud, in battaile against the furious fierce Romanes, to suppresse their tyrannie and execrable filthinesse in abusing maydes, wiues, and widdowes. But as shee beheld the victorie vpon theyr sides, because shee would not come vnder Voada.

their

Voadicia. their captiuitie, she poysoned her selfe, and so dyed. Voadicia her yoonger daughter, afterward escaping the handes of the said Romanes, with a mightie power of the Britaines entered into the ile of Mame, and in a night battayle, there slewe them in a wonderfull number, destroying their fortresses, and holdes. Notwithstanding at the last being taken, shee was beheaded, her elder sister being married to king Marius. Athildis the daugter of the sayd king Marius, was also a moste noble woman, whome the French king Marcomerus married for the onely naturall giftes and sciences which shee had aboue other women, and had seuen sonnes by her. Claudia Rufina, a noble Britain, witte and learned both in Greeke Latine, hauing to husband one Aulus Rufus a learned knight, a poet of Bonony, and a philosopher of the Stoycall sort, is much commended of Martialis the poet, for the Epigrammes and poemes, which shee therin compyled in both those toonges.

Athildis.

Claudia. Rufina.

Emerita. Emerita the sister of king Lucius, which is called the first christened king, a ladie most vertuous and faithfull, for constantly affirming the veritie of Christ,

suffe-

suffered moste tyrannous deathe and was burnt in the fire. Helena Flauia, the daughter of king Coelus, and mother to greate Constantine the Emperour, was a woman of incomparable bewtie and learning. None could be found like her in the artes liberall, neither yet in the fine handling of all instrumentes of musicke. She excelled all other in the diuers speeches of nations, specially in the Latine, Greeke, and Hebrue. She made a booke of the prouidence of God, another of the immortalitie of the soule, with certaine Greeke poemes, epistles, and diuers other treatises. Constantia her daughter, was also a woman of most excellent giftes, had shee not in the ende declined to the detestable sect of the Arryanes, by certaine hypocritish priestes. Vrsula Cynolura, the flouishing daughter of Dionothus the Duke of Cornewall, was so noblie brought vp in all liberall discipline, that Conanus the king of little Britaine desired her to wife, and as she went thitherward with xi. thousand Britaines wiues more, by chance of weather and violence of sea rouers, both she and they perished by the way.

Helena Flauia.

Constantia.

Vrsula.

Anna the sister of Aurelius Ambrosius which

Anne due

which was afterward married to Loth the king of Pictes, and Anna the twinne ſiſter of king Arthur, are of writers magnified, for their diuers and excellent graces.

Morganis.

Morganis a woman of incomparable loue towards her parentes, and countrey, ſo ſecretly and wiſely conueyed the body of king Arthur, the moſt worthy gouernour of the Britaines, that the Engliſh Saxons could neuer come to it, to doe their violence thereon.

Hermelinda.

Hermelinda, ryſing of the Engliſh Saxons bloud, for her excellent beautie and noble behauiour became the wife of Cunibertus the king of Lombardie.

Hylda.

Hylda, a noble woman, both goddy wiſe, and learned, not onely diſputed in the open Synode at Strenſhalce in the North countrey againſt the prelates, concerning their newly found out celebration of Eaſter, and their crowne ſhaning, with other ceremonies, but alſo wrote a treatiſe againſt biſhop Agilbert a French man, the buſieſt among the.

Tres ſiliæ.

The three daughters of king Alphred, Elfleda, Elfritha, and Ethelgona, were wonderfully expert in the liberall ſciences.

Elenora.

Alenor the wife of king Henry the ſecond, was learned alſo, and wrote diuers epiſtles to Pope Celeſtine

sime the third, and also to king Iohn her
poongest sonne.

Ioanna the poongest daughter of the Ioanna.
saide king Henry, so much delighted in
good letters, that before shee shoulde be
married to king William of Cicill, she
caused her father to send ouer two learned
men of England, Walther and Richard
with a french doctour called Petrus Ble-
sensis to instruct him in them, specially in
the arte of versifieng. And at her com-
ming thither, the one of those Englishe
men was made archbishop of Panorme,
and the other bishop of Siracusa, in re-
compence of their labors. Margaret the Margareta.
noble mother of king Henry þ vi. so plen-
teously minded the preferment of sciences
and going forward of learninges, that she
builded in Cambridge for þ same purpose
the Colledges of Christ and of S. Iohn
the Euangelist, and gaue landes for their
maintenance, as Queene Elizabeth did a- Elizabeth.
fore, to the queenes colledge there. Long
were it to rehearse the exceeding number
of noble women, which in this land of
Britaine or realme of England, haue ex-
celled in bewtie, wit, wisdome, science, lan-
guages, liberalitie, pollices, heroycal force

and

and suche other notable vertues, and by reason of them done feates wonderfull.

Names. Gyther yet to loste out theyr names and regester them one by one, whiche haue bene married out of the same, to Emperours, Kinges, Dukes, Earles, worthie capitaines, Phylosophers, Phisitians, Astronomers, Poets, and other of renowmed fame and letters, onely for their most rare graces and giftes.

Writers. Though none in this land haue yet done as did among the Greekes Plutarchus, and among the Latines Boccatius with other authours afore named, that is to say, left behinde them Catologes or Nomenclatures of famous and honourable women, yet haue it not at anie time bene barraine of them. No, not in the dayes of most popish darkenesse: As appeareth by Alenor Cobham, the wife of good Duke Humfrey of Glocester, brother to king Henry the fift. Whome Antichristes graund capitaines, the bishoppes then of England, in hate of her name and beleue, accused of sorcerous inchantments and experimentes of Necromancie against their holy horned whorish church: And at the last slew her noble husband in a false par-

Alenora Cobham.

lement

lement at Burie, by their owne hyred slaughterman Pole, as they neuer are without such. If they were worthy praple, which had these aforenamed vertues single, or after a bodily sorte onely, we must of congruence graunt them worthie double honour, whiche haue them more plenteously doubled. As now since christes gospel hath risen, we haue beholden them, and yet see them still to this day in manie noble women, not rising of flesh and bloud as in the other, but of that mightie liuing spirit of his, which banquished death, hell, and the deuill. Double honour.

Consider yet how strongly that spirite in Anne Askew, set them all at naught with all their artillerie and ministers of mischiefe both vpon the racke, and also in the fire. Whose memorie is now in benediction (as Iesus Syrach reporteth of Moses) and shall neuer be forgotten of the righteous. She as Christes mightie member, hath strongly troden downe the head of the serpent, and gone hence with most noble victorie ouer the pestiferous seede of that viperous worme of Rome, the gates of hell not preuailing against her. What other noble women haue, Anne Askew. Noble

Women. it doth now, and wil yet hereafter appeare more largely by their godly doctrine and deedes of faith. Marke this present booke for one, whose translation was the worke of her, which was but a babe at the doyng thereof. Marke also the graue sentences, which she gueth forth to the world, & laud ỳ liuing father of our Lord Iesus Christ, which hath thus taken his heauenly wisedome from the great graue seniours, that onely are wise in their owne conceites, and giuen it so largely to children. (Mat. 11.) That heauenly Lord grant her and other noble women long continuance in the same to his high plasure: That like as they are become glorious to the world by the study of good letters, so may they also appeare glorious in his sight by dayly exercise in his diuine scriptures, whose nature is in processe of time to kindle their minds and inflame their hearts in the loue of Christ their eternall spouse, as this present booke requireth.

Anne Kett
X

Thus endeth this godly Meditation.